

To the Environment Committee
State Capital
Hartford, Connecticut

RE: H.B. 5720: AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO
DOUBLE THE CAPACITY FOR SHELLFISH SAMPLE TESTING AND TO ESTABLISH A
SITE FOR SHELLFISH SAMPLE TESTING EAST OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

At present shellfish commissions are run by volunteers that are charged with the protection and propagation of the shellfish in the waters under their control. They test the water for quality, they seed the beds adding up to tons of seeds added to appropriate parts of the rivers and estuaries, they issue the licenses and manage the catch.

I met with some of them this week. The temp was in the low 30's, the wind was blowing up to 45 knots on Wednesday, March 18; They had been out on the rivers testing. Following the testing they then had to drive down to the lab in Milford. It takes over an hour to drive to New Haven and Milford is beyond that. Mind you these are volunteers and in the "On Season" they spend many hours managing the shell fishing in their towns.

The shellfish industry has expanded through the efforts to improve the waters of Long Island Sound. The oysters are in demand all over the country. By promoting a Laboratory east of the CT River, the wait time for the results of the testing can be reduced. The economic value of the shellfish harvest can improve as well as the numbers of persons employed. There are numerous facilities qualified to upgrade their existing laboratories to provide the testing, namely the Oceanographic department of the Avery Point branch of the University of CT in Groton at the mouth of the Thames River.

I URGE YOU TO SUPPORT **Bill HB 5720**

Thank you for allowing me to speak,

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